

paying for food or, paying for medication. They will go without heat because they cannot afford to buy fuel. The source of this issue is Social Security. Although this retirement system has benefited many Americans, it needs to be changed. Social Security often does not change with inflation, or does not change enough to account for increased prices. While prices are rising, Social Security is not keeping up. This leaves seniors to make difficult choices regarding spending. Every year, Social Security should be assessed, and changed accordingly to inflation. To pay for this, we would need to raise the Social Security tax percentage to seven percent. This would allow America to adequately pay for the needs of our elderly.

This nation is nowhere near perfect. We have many issues we must address, domestic and foreign. We cannot expect to properly address issues overseas, until we fix the home we live in. We must fix America from within. Once we do this, we will truly be able to call ourselves the greatest nation in the world.

VIVIAN HUANG, SOUTH BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL (SECOND PLACE)

The year of 2015 has been historic for the United States of America. We have signed a landmark agreement on climate change, enacted marriage equality, and become economically sound—marking greater economic growth rates than predicted and reaching a five percent unemployment rate. Still, we enter the year of 2016 with two pressing issues remaining on the global and the national scale: terrorism and healthcare. As we tackle these issues, we must remind ourselves that the United States of America is truly one nation, indivisible, with each citizen carrying responsibilities to support our nation's values, as well as one another.

First, following recent acts of terror around the world, it is top-priority for the United States to defeat the threat of ISIS. Enough is enough. Rest assured that rather than sending our troops to combat zones in Iraq and Syria, we will take an active role in helping our European allies lead the battle. America must provide rigorous train-and-assist programs for Kurdish forces, exert a tight grip on ISIS-controlled territory, cut off supply lines, and implore the Gulf States to combat terrorism. Furthermore, previous experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan have revealed that merely destroying one source of terrorism will not suffice. To ultimately render counterterrorism and military action unnecessary in Iraq and Syria, we plan on developing political, economic, and educational reforms that will effectively respond to complex sectarian and ethnic divisions in the region.

Let's make it clear that the United States is not declaring a war against religion, but rather against the violence of extremism. As human beings, it is our responsibility to help the innocent Syrian families fleeing ISIS and Assad's brutal regime. Now is not the time to turn our backs, but to provide humanitarian aid and shelter, even though it requires extreme vigilance. Additionally, every American must confront the problem of bigotry, which only becomes exploited by ISIS for its own recruitment. We all have the duty to stand up against discriminatory rhetoric and hostile actions. We all have the duty to uphold the country's values by supporting each other—our friends, neighbors, co-workers, and fellow community members—with tolerance and respect.

Second, an important issue on the domestic front continues to be healthcare. Physical and mental wellness is a fundamental need for the American people. Over the past year, the Affordable Care Act has improved access to this basic human right for the un-

insured. However, there is more to accomplish in 2016. Until completely comprehensive universal healthcare—namely, a single-payer system—is set into place, Medicaid must be expanded in 20 remaining states and community health clinics must be placed in underserved locations.

The Department of Health and Human Services must address the chief drivers of healthcare costs: hospital expenditures, physician and clinical services, and skyrocketing drug prices escalate the national health spending. To target this broad problem, a single-payer healthcare system will minimize unnecessary spending by requiring hospitals to operate on government-approved standardized billing procedures. Hence, hospitals and pharmaceutical companies will not be able to overcharge patients and run extortionate monopolies on essential medications.

Indeed, American citizens' rugged bravery, wise judgment, and drive for excellence have made this country great. But we can always progress forward, as long we stand united. Therefore, we will tackle the urgent issues of terrorism and healthcare not only with confidence, but also with the ambition to remain one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RYAN RACICOT, MILTON HIGH SCHOOL (THIRD PLACE)

The most pressing and immediate danger of today's society is the rapidly changing climate. The scientific community agrees virtually unanimously, that climate change is a very real and imminent concern. Continuation down the current path at this pace will eventually result in the ultimate demise of the human race.

This issue is not the United States' to tackle alone. In order to fully reverse the effects of climate change, it will take a worldwide collaborative effort unlike anything the world has ever faced before. The United States' role going forward is to set an example for other first world countries. The United Nations' conference this year in Paris was a step in the right direction. But the United States needs to agree to a binding commitment to reduce emissions. Without a whole-hearted promise to abide to these reductions, the United States will not be taken seriously on this issue.

The United States government cannot expect corporations to make eco-friendly movements unprovoked, it is simply not worth the financial burden. The federal government needs to incentivize eco-friendly waste management for businesses, by making eco-friendly business more profitable than environmentally irresponsible business. As it stands now, no company has motivation to protect the environment. Doing so only hurts production and makes them less competitive. To reverse this trend, the federal government needs to enforce pre-existing environmental laws and spend more on environmental saving measures.

To convert all factories to updated standards for emissions, a large amount of money will be needed initially, but over time, a system in which clean energy is valued more than profit will result in a much more sustainable economy. Companies who destroy the environment and experience greater profit as a result will be forced to pay for their own pollution management systems. Greatly increasing taxes on environmentally irresponsible corporations will make clean energy more fiscally appealing than polluting means of energy. This is not stealing money from the American people or a redistribution of wealth. This is using money made by multi-billion dollar companies at the expense of the environment to help fix the problem they themselves helped to cre-

ate. Also, by taking the charge on creating environmentally friendly products and machinery, the potential for the United States to make a profit is huge. By incentivizing other countries to go eco-friendly, and selling the materials and means to do so creates jobs and income, which boosts the U.S. economy, all without destroying the environment.

Unlike many other issues troubling the state of Vermont, the nation, and the world, climate change affects every single person. Regardless of race, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, religion, education or political affiliation, climate change affects all, especially the most disadvantaged. Because of this, it is everyone's personal responsibility to do their part in saving the planet. One cannot stand idle and expect other people do all of the dirty work. Helping to save the earth is not about how you can benefit, it is about how you can help the greater cause. We can no longer allow large corporations to prioritize making a profit over responsible waste management. The short-term profits for the rich are vastly outweighed by the long-term environmental consequences felt by all.●

TRIBUTE TO TERESA THOMPSON

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Teresa Thompson, an intern in my Rapid City, SD, office for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past few months.

Teresa is a graduate of Sturgis High School in Sturgis, SD. Currently, she is attending Black Hills State University where she is majoring in history. She is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of her experience while also raising her two children, Ben and Rachel.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Teresa Thompson for all of the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT OF THE VETO OF S.J. RES. 22, PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY RELATING TO THE DEFINITION OF "WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES" UNDER THE FEDERAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ACT, RECEIVED ON JANUARY 19, 2016—PM 37

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, spread in full upon the Journal, and held at the desk:

To the Senate of the United States:

I am returning herewith without my approval S.J. Res. 22, a resolution that would nullify a rule issued by the Environmental Protection Agency and the